

Director's Report & Recommendation

Administrative Design Review for Townhouse Development in Seattle



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Recommendation: Administrative Design Review 3

Purpose and Intent 3

Option Evaluated 4

Public Process 5

Key Features of the Proposal 6

Design Flexibility 7

Permit Process Timeline 8

Design Review Threshold 13

Staffing & Administration 13

Applicant Cost & Time 14

Public Involvement 15

Conclusion 15

Key to Successful Townhouse Design 16

Administrative Design Review (ADR) For Townhouses

In 2008, Mayor Nickels asked the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to develop an Administrative Design Review (ADR) process for townhouses in conjunction with updating of multifamily zoning requirements. The proposal is intended to apply ADR* to new townhouse development without adding significantly to the development costs.

** ADR is a form of design review that is conducted by DPD staff, and is not subject to Design Review Board review.*

The proposal would improve project design by adding a design review component while significantly reducing the amount of permit processing time compared to the current ADR. Compared to the current ADR process this proposal would reduce permit processing timelines by an estimated 40%. The proposal results in target processing timelines that are no longer than the current average processing timelines for townhouse building permits that do not include a design review component.

About the Director's Recommendation

The Director's recommendations for ADR for townhouses are presented in this report, which is also available on DPD's website at : <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/TownhouseReview/Overview/>. Information on the website includes an *Options Report* and a *Status Report*. These documents provide additional analysis of the City's existing administrative design review process and of alternatives explored leading to release of the Director's recommendations.

Purpose and Intent

Townhouses are a valuable housing option for Seattle residents, but some townhouses have been the subject of critical review, often negative, in recent years for a perceived lack of quality design or "fit" in existing neighborhoods. The intent of the ADR proposal, along with improved design standards proposed as part of the amendments to the multifamily zoning requirements currently under review by the City Council, is to help to ensure that new townhouse development contributes positively to neighborhoods.

Currently, design review is not required for the majority of new townhouse development. Design review is only required in Lowrise 3 (L3) zones when projects are proposed to exceed 8 dwelling units, in Midrise or Highrise zones when a project is proposed to exceed 20 units, and there is no requirement for design review in Lowrise 1 (L1) or Lowrise 2 (L2) zones. Some townhouse developments have voluntarily applied for design review when an applicant seeks the flexibility of development standard departures, in which case the project is reviewed by staff in accordance with an established ADR process.

Design review has been a part of Seattle’s land use and development approval process since 1994. Design review has demonstrated that it can effectively improve the quality of design and the compatibility of new developments with their surroundings by reviewing site-specific conditions and project plans against adopted citywide and neighborhood specific design guidelines. Design Review also offers flexibility to improve upon design based on unique site conditions through departures from development standards allowed when the departure would result in a better design on the site. The goal of the new administrative design review process is to require design review for smaller townhouse developments in order to achieve better design and foster greater acceptance of townhouses in Seattle neighborhoods.

Options Evaluated

Several options for a new ADR process were evaluated. Review of data on over 35 ADR projects processed over a three year timeframe starting in 2005 demonstrated that the current ADR process will not support an efficient review of a significantly larger volume of new townhouse developments and allow a reasonable degree of cost containment for both the applicant and the City. Over 350 townhouse projects were permitted without design review during the 3-year timeframe evaluated. The average time required to process an ADR project was 8 – 12 months, requiring on average approximately 36 hours of staff review. The potential impact on DPD staffing and resources would be extensive, and a burden on applicants could be significant if the existing ADR process was relied upon to review the larger volume of townhouse projects. Therefore, two options for revisions and streamlining the ADR process were explored and compared to existing administrative design review. The options were evaluated extensively and are described in detail in the Options Report:

- **Option 1 - Existing Administrative Design Review.** Minor adjustments to existing ADR thresholds and apply the existing ADR process to all new townhouse development.
- **Option 2 – Streamlined Administrative Design Review.** Modify the existing ADR process to find efficiencies in processing timelines, simplify submittal requirements, and retain opportunities for design flexibility.
- **Option 3 – Pre-Approved Plans.** Develop a process that incorporates pre-approval of quality townhouse design plans.

On balance, Option 2 – Streamlined Administrative Design Review was determined to offer the greatest opportunity to effectively achieve the goals intended for ADR. It would also allow the expansion of design review without unnecessarily burdening the Design Review Board, which during better economic conditions, often operates at capacity. The proposed ADR process was found to most effectively minimize impacts on applicants; minimize impact on DPD staffing and resources; contribute to cost containment that can help in the effort to reduce the cost of housing, and is readily implementable in the existing permit review framework without significant additional program development by DPD.

Public Process

DPD and consultants initiated an extensive public process to develop the proposal. The project was informed early by a series of interviews and stakeholder meetings with community members, designers, developers and industry representatives. These interviews were conducted from October through December of 2008. The results were compiled into an ADR Status Report documenting the opinions and relevant information on the existing processes through experience and anecdotal observations. Based on this information DPD and consultants developed schematic options and presented them to the public at a public meeting on January 20th, 2009. The options were then refined and a revised Options Report was prepared and presented at a public meeting on May 4, 2009. After the public meeting, DPD and consultants developed the final proposal.

In all of the public involvement settings, participants identified desired outcomes, suggested improvements to the existing system and entirely new ways of conducting review. Based on public involvement, a set of desired outcomes of general consensus emerged:

Performance

- ADR expansion should be supported by DPD staff.
- ADR expansion should be supported by stakeholders.
- Streamline the ADR and permitting processes.
- Ensure consistency of the processes from project to project.
- Staff skills should include design knowledge.
- Use staff training and organization to create a qualified ADR team.

Design

- Improve project design.
- Achieve better site design by considering development standard departures.
- Explore development of standard plans.
- Create a multi-level system of review that tailors to project complexity.

Financial

- Reduce costs of ADR.

Community

- Preserve, and potentially improve the public comment opportunity.

Key Features of the Proposal

Key elements of the proposal further described in the detailed process diagram (on pages 9,10 and 11) include:

- **Threshold.** ADR would be required for all new developments including 3 or more dwelling units, at least one of which is a townhouse, in any zone if the project is not already subject to design review.
- **Streamlined Process.** The design review process would be reduced from two major steps – Early Design Guidance (EDG) and Design Review Recommendation – to one major design guidance step.
- **Simplified Application and Submittal Requirements.** The complexity and cost of documents required to be submitted to DPD for design review would be reduced, and the design guidance report back to the applicant would be simplified.
- **Pre-Submittal Guidance.** The focus would be on a more substantial Pre-Submittal Conference, which would include a full range of reviewers including other departments as needed.
- **Staffing.** A sub-group of 3 to 5 design review staff would be assigned to ADR for townhouse projects to help ensure consistency in review. One staff member would conduct both design review and zoning review, currently addressed by two or more staff.
- **Public Comment Opportunity.** Public notice and comment would be required for all townhouse developments early in the design guidance process. All design review packets would be posted on the City website.
- **Integration of Permits.** Applicants could more readily combine Master Use Permit (MUP) and Building Permit (BP) submittals.
- **Monitoring.** In the beginning, the proposed process would apply only to townhouses. However, in the future, after monitoring and evaluation, the process could be applied to other smaller developments, with the goal of improving design or limiting the volume of projects reviewed by Design Review Boards.
- **Design Flexibility.** The proposal introduces flexibility in application of development standards to improve project design. See page 7 for a full description of elements to introduce design flexibility.

Design Flexibility

The proposal introduces flexibility in application of development standards, allowing designers and project reviewers greater choices to improve design. This would occur in two specific ways:

- **Design Adjustments.** The proposal introduces the ability for minor design adjustments to be permitted at the time of the Master Use Permit and Building Permit review without triggering additional notice requirement or appeal opportunity (**Type I land use decision**). Design adjustments would provide opportunity for limited deviations from a defined subset of development standards on a percentage basis in order to improve design. If a development proposal, in responding to design guidance, includes a design adjustment within the defined parameter it could be approved.

Design adjustments would be available for those development flexibilities most routinely approved as part of the existing ADR process. Those standards include setbacks from property lines and lot coverage limits. In addition, the Mayor's proposed Multifamily Code Update includes new prescriptive design standards, and these are proposed to be eligible for adjustments. In keeping with the authority available through the Type I decision type framework, the amount of adjustment would be capped at a fixed percentage.

Design adjustments are added as a feature of the ADR proposal to increase design choice without adding to permit processing time. Design adjustments will allow for a greater range of site specific design responses, and 'common sense' flexibility from development standards. Design adjustments are offered to provide a value added for project applicants through ADR, and to encourage better townhouse design.

- **Development Standard Departures.** All projects will continue to have access to development standard departures, an existing opportunity in ADR, for departures from development standards that are beyond the range considered as design adjustments. Departures are deviations from standards in the land use code to improve project design based on site specific conditions and citywide and neighborhood design guidelines. Development standard departures are discretionary decisions (**Type II land use decision**) that are subject to additional notice of decision and opportunity for appeal to the Hearing Examiner. Departures will be evaluated by the ADR planner during the design guidance review and MUP review. A departure is allowed if the applicant demonstrates the departure responds to the design guidelines and results in better design than strict adherence to development standards.

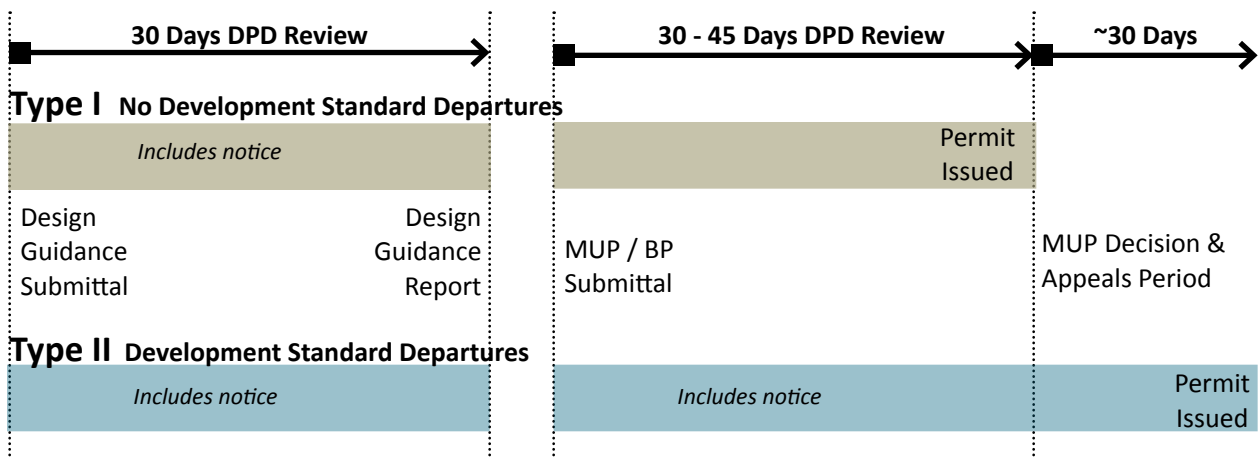
Permit Process Timeline

An important consideration in evaluating the proposal is the amount of permit review processing time necessary to approve a project. Timeline goals for DPD review are included in the proposal. Process diagrams on the following pages illustrate the proposed ADR process steps in detail. A brief overview of the proposed timeline is summarized as follows:

- Total permit review time of roughly 60-75 days is expected for the portion of the process under DPD review for projects without departures (Type I): approximately 30 days in the design guidance phase; and approximately 30-45 days in the Master Use Permit/building permit review phase.
- Approximately 30 days of additional time could be expected for projects with development standard departures (Type II) in order to accommodate the required written land use decision, notice and appeal period.
- The target maximum amount of DPD planner review hours is 20.
- These timeframes are significant reductions from the existing ADR process on the order of 40%.
- Assuming applicant design and development time of roughly 2.5 months between the design guidance phase and MUP / building permit phase, the total timeframe for the processing of the project can be estimated at about 5 months from design review intake to permit issuance.
- The proposed permit process timeline is not an increase over the current permit processing timeline for townhouse building permits, which is typically 4-6 months from intake to issuance, and 60-75 under DPD review.

The diagram illustrates expected general review timelines per the proposal. If departures are included, the review would be a Type II Decision, which requires a written MUP decision, additional public notice and opportunity for appeal to the City’s Hearing Examiner. If no formal development standard departures are included in the project the review would be a Type I Decision with no further requirement for notice and no appeal period. The diagram depicts these two tracks.

ADR Timelines*



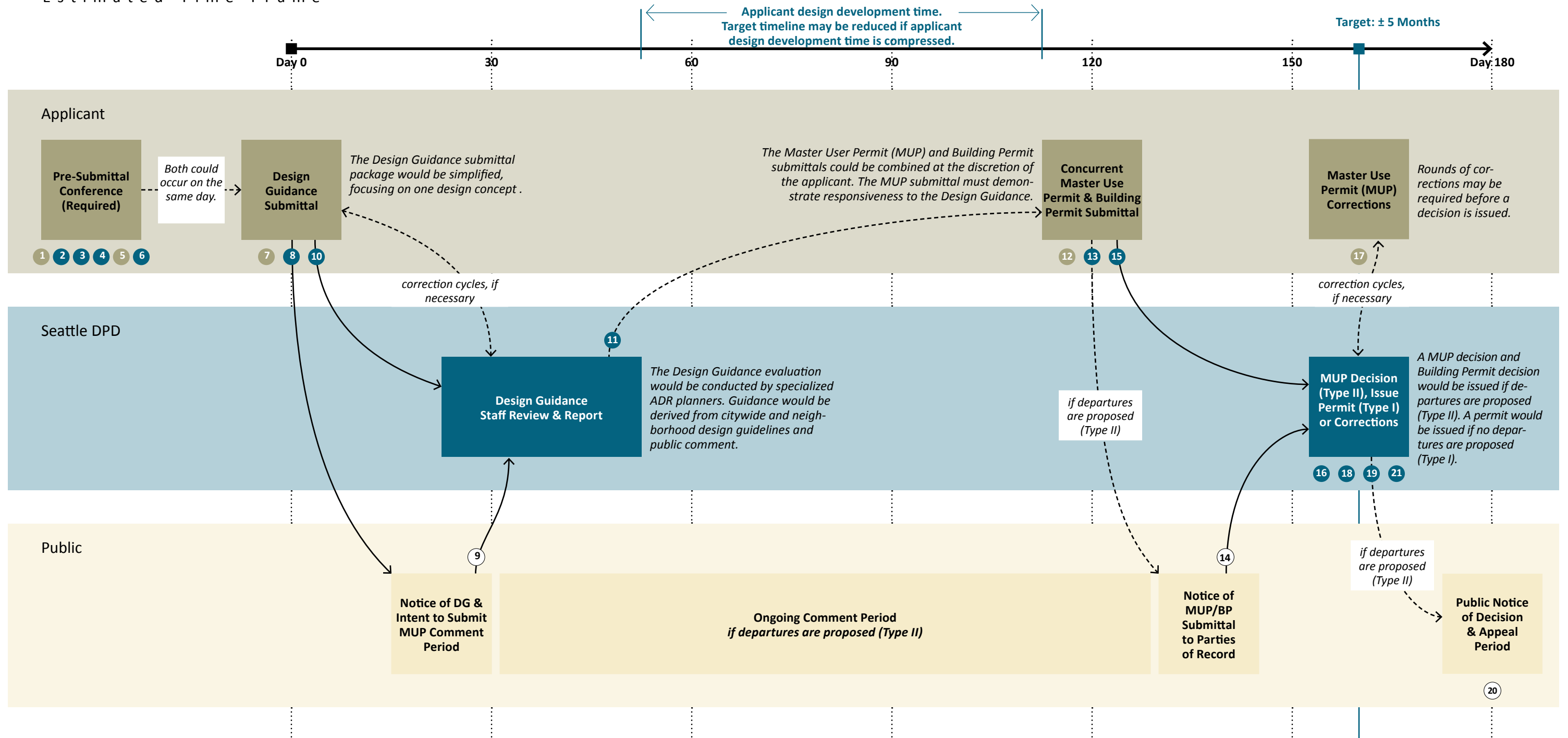
* Timelines include the duration of DPD review of the permit application.

Recommendation: Administrative Design Review

The Recommendation streamlines the existing administrative design review process by reducing the number of steps from two (EDG + Design Recommendation) to one (Design Guidance). Further, applicants have the option to more readily submit Building Permit and Master Use Permit (MUP) applications at the same time.

- Applies to all townhouse developments
- Allows design adjustments for flexibility
- If no departures requested, then decision is not appealable (Type I)
- Allows development departures
- If departures requested, then decision is appealable (Type II)
- One ongoing public notice period

Estimated Time Frame



Recommendation: Administrative Design Review

Pre-Submittal

Developer	Seattle DPD	Public
<p>1 To initiate Administrative Design Review of a proposed project, the applicant submits a completed Pre-Submittal Conference Application (PSCA) to the Applicant Services Center.</p> <p>5 Both the applicant and the planner attend the Pre-Submittal Conference (PSC). On the PSCA, the applicant may request the attendance of other DPD and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) staff to address outstanding site and building questions. If the applicant has building questions, this is an appropriate stage for a building permit representative to be present. The applicant prepares notes of the meeting and can send them to the planner for concurrence prior to submission in the Design Guidance (DG) packet. If the applicant is not familiar with the process, they can choose to view this as an informational meeting, and then follow the drop-off submittal process outlined by the DPD. Fees for PSCs and additional hours of review are listed in the current version of the Fee Subtitle available online on DPD’s “Fees” page at www.seattle.gov/DPD/about/fees.</p>	<p>2 A DPD planner is assigned from a group of ADR-trained planners within the pool of planners performing full design reviews.</p> <p>3 The planner visits the site prior to the PSC to assess site conditions and complete an annotated checklist of priority guidelines. Ideally, the applicant will have sent the planner the proposal beforehand so the planner can review the proposal while on site, prior to meeting with the applicant.</p> <p>4 The planner reviews the PSCA and invites sdot and all relevant and requested DPD staff to attend the PSC. DPD also submits the annotated checklist of priority guidelines to the applicant in advance of the PSC.</p> <p>6 At the PSC, the planner gives the applicant general information on the review process and initial guidance on site, building and design issues. The applicant may choose to submit the DG package following the meeting. The planner may advise the applicant to come back for another PSC meeting if the PSCA materials do not appear to reflect an application that would meet requirements.</p>	

Design Guidance

Developer	Seattle DPD	Public
<p>7 The applicant submits the project for review by preparing a Design Guidance submittal package at any time after the PSC. Client Assistance Memo (CAM) 105 (drop off submittals) and a new ADR-specific CAM will detail the DG submittal requirements. Forms and instructions are available at the asc and online at www.seattle.gov/DPD/publications/forms. The intent of the DG package is to present an initial design proposal for review. The applicant provides three copies of the tabloid-sized (11 x 17 inches) DG packet which includes one fully developed schematic design concept and two or more alternative concept sketches. Other specific items required at the time of DG submittal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed Letter of Authorization • Signed Financial Responsibility Form • Completed Drop-off Submittal Fee Worksheet • Copy of Preliminary Application • Completed Application, Attachment A, 3 copies of 11 x 17 DG packet • Copy of Pre-Submittal Conference meeting notes. <p>The applicant will also upload a digital version (.pdf file) of the DG package to the DPD’s web site per instructions found at www.seattle.gov/DPD/pdfinstructions.</p>	<p>8 After the applicant has submitted a complete application, Land Use Intake Bulletin staff installs a yellow placard to indicate that the site is undergoing land use review. The public comment period commences with the planner “noticing” the proposed project via mailers to residents and property owners within 300 feet of the site, as specified in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 23.76.011. Notice of the application is provided in DPD’s weekly Land Use Information Bulletin (available online at www.seattle.gov/DPD/notices) and the DG package are posted on the web site. The public comment period allows citizens to comment on all aspects of the project, including siting and design issues.</p> <p>10 After the application is received and the public notice has been sent, the planner conducts an Administrative Design Guidance Review no later than 30 days after receipt of a complete DG application. Guidance is derived from citywide and neighborhood design guidelines.</p> <p>11 Within two weeks following the DG meeting, the planner creates a brief Design Guidance report generated from citywide and neighborhood design guidelines, independent design judgement and comments received from the public. The DG report provides design guidance that must be addressed by the applicant in the MUP/BP submittal. Any and all departures requested by the applicant are identified and formalized in the DG report.</p>	<p>9 To be considered in the Design Guidance report, comments must be submitted to the DPD within two weeks of the initial notice. The most effective comments address elements within the purview of the Design Review process, such as architectural concept and consistency and exterior finish materials. For projects that request departures, community members can comment at any time until two weeks after the project has been submitted for MUP/BP.</p>

Recommendation: Administrative Design Review Master Use & Building Permits

Developer	Seattle DPD	Public
<p>12 After receiving the DG report, the applicant can schedule a combined Master Use Permit/Building Permit (MUP/BP) intake appointment. (The applicant can also choose to schedule MUP and BP intake appointments separately.) A MUP/BP is a consolidated permit including all required land use reviews and building permit reviews. All projects undergoing ADR are required to enter the MUP process. The applicant uses the guidance from the planner to produce the MUP/BP set. The applicant's must ensure that all guidance is addressed. Failure to do so will add rounds of review, comment and corrections which will delay permit issuance. Fees for MUP submittals and additional hours of review are listed in the Fee Subtitle at www.seattle.gov/DPD/about/fees. Forms and instructions are available online at www.seattle.gov/DPD/publications/forms or from the Applicant Services Center. See below for list of required submittal materials.</p>	<p>13 For projects requesting departures, mailers are sent to parties of record who corresponded with DPD after the Design Guidance notice. The planner also notices the MUP submittal on the DPD's web site. Notice procedures for the MUP process are specified per SMC 23.76.</p> <p>15 Upon receipt of the MUP/BP, DPD divides the plans and assigns them to various review stations depending on the nature of the proposed project. All MUP/BPs go through a land use/zoning review and a Design Guidance review (both completed by the assigned ADR planner), a structural and ordinance review, an addressing station, an energy review, a drainage review and a fire review at a minimum. Additional reviews may include, but are not limited to: Department of Neighborhoods (DON), an Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) review, a shoring review, a conveyance review, a mechanical review and a geosoils review all depending on whether unique conditions on-site trigger specific issues.</p> <p>16 Each reviewer reviews the MUP/BP submittal for the information relevant to their specific station. If the reviewer determines the application is complete, he/she can approve the plans for that particular review. However, if the reviewer feels the plans need clarifications or corrections, a Correction Notice is prepared and sent to the applicant and the plans are dropped off at Plans Routing for the applicant to pick up.</p>	<p>14 For projects that request departures (Type II), Parties of Record are notified of the MUP/BP submittal. The public comment period remains open for 14 days following the date of the MUP/BP notification.</p>

Decision

Developer	Seattle DPD	Public
<p>17 If correction notices have been generated, the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picks up the plans from Plans Routing within 7 days of being notified, otherwise Plans Routing will send the plans to the applicant and bill them; Responds to all correction notices by updating drawings, forms and plan sets; and Resubmits all plan sets back to Plans Routing for another round of review. 	<p>18 After all correction rounds have been completed and approved, DPD issues a MUP Decision for projects including departures. If no departures are requested, DPD signs off on the plans and permits are issued.</p> <p>19 If no departures are requested, a Type I Decision is issued and no further notice is required. If departures are requested, a Type II Decision is issued and the planner publishes a Notice of Decision which is mailed to all parties of record and posted in the weekly Land Use Information Bulletin (available at www.seattle.gov/DPD/notices). A Type II Decision can be appealed to the City's Hearing Examiner, as specified in smc 23.76.022.</p> <p>21 For projects including departures, if the MUP Decision is not appealed, the planner can issue a combined MUP/BP. If there are appeals, the permit cannot be issued until after the Hearing Examiner Process issues a decision authorizing permit issuance as specified in SMC 23.76.</p>	<p>20 If a Type II Decision with departures is issued, community members have two weeks to appeal the decision following publication of the Notice of Decision, as specified in SMC 23.76.</p>

MUP/BP Application Submittal Materials

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six (6) sets of MUP/BP level plans and drawings which include exterior materials and colors, departure documentation, and justifying, in narrative form, any requested development standard departures. The MUP/BP set must also include: DPD cover sheet, site plan(s), floor plans, elevations, landscape plans, survey, sections, wall/floor/door/window schedules, details, building code info/diagrams, civil plans, structural plans, shoring plans, etc. Attachment B - Response to Design Guidelines statement Design Departure Matrix (table of departure requests in quantitative terms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed Letter of Authorization Signed Financial Responsibility Form Copy of PASV 4 (at least) colored and shadowed elevations on a single sheet Energy Calculations and Equipment Sizing Calculations Structural Calculations Geotechnical Report Storm Drainage Report Water Availability Certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building or Mechanical Permit Contact Disclosure Form Special Inspection Schedule Geotechnical Inspection Schedule Letter of Intent to meet House Bill 1848 (if required) Colored landscape plans State Environmental Protection Act (sepa) application (if required) Administrative Conditional Use application (if required)
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Design Review Threshold

The review threshold would be any development that includes three or more dwelling units, at least one of which is a townhouse. A townhouse is a ground-related dwelling unit attached to at least one other dwelling unit. The threshold is intended to require design review for all new townhouse developments. The threshold will discourage the development practice of dividing townhouse projects into four- or six-unit parts to avoid the existing design review threshold of eight units—sometimes referred to as ‘micro-permitting.

Staffing & Administration

Training and Specialization of Existing DR Staff

Projects undergoing ADR will be reviewed by planners with Design Review experience who receive specialized training in ADR procedures and issues. Fifty (50) or more projects per year could be accommodated at existing staffing levels. Each of the specialized ADR planners would spend 15–25% of their total time on ADR projects.

DPD would incur costs for the training of up to five specialized ADR planners. Training would prepare planners for the new review and permitting procedures and design issues specific to townhouses. Planners could be trained in-house or through a small consultant contract.

16–24 Design Review Planner Hours per Project

An average of twenty (20) Design Review planner hours are projected for each project, 46% fewer than the existing Administrative Design Review.

Administrative, Processing and Management Cost

Implementing the Recommended Administrative Design Review will incur modest additional costs in the administration and management of associated MUP permits accommodated without adding more staff. The program will introduce another 50 projects with more complex processing requirements into the permitting stream, with the potential, under peak volumes, to add some minor delay to DPD’s overall flow of land use permits. The new ADR procedures will require some additional training and coordination for various operations staff.

Project Review Fee

Since DPD fees are structured to cover the full cost of review, revenue collected will cover the cost of the program. Conservatively, an estimated \$5,000 in additional fees per project would likely cover the cost of one additional planner, plus all associated administrative, processing and management costs.

Applicant Cost & Time

Fees

The recommended Administrative Design Review process will add permitting fees to development projects that formerly would not have been required. The fees are estimated to total \$5,000 per project, 46% less than fees collected on average under the current ADR program.

Review Time

Design Guidance and Master Use Permit DPD review times are not anticipated to increase beyond the current average of 60–75 days of DPD review time for townhouse-scale projects. Overall design development and review times for townhouse projects responding to site conditions and neighborhood context will likely average a total of four to five months for the applicant, a reduction of as much as 50% on projects undergoing the current ADR process.

Design Flexibility

Project applicants will have access to improved design flexibility through ADR, a factor that can add value for project proponents. As described on page 7, design flexibility will be available in two specific ways. A limited set of design adjustments will be available without requiring additional public notice or appeal opportunity. And secondly, all projects going through ADR will have access to the existing development standard departure opportunity. Improved project design according to design guidelines must be demonstrated in order to receive either level of flexibility. Increased design flexibility can add value for applicants by making constrained sites more useable, allowing a greater range of site development configurations, and by resulting in higher quality designs that can command better sales values.

Public Involvement

Early Notice and Comment Period

For all project proposals undergoing ADR, a public notice and comment opportunity will occur early at the time of Design Guidance, in project review. This improves public involvement over the typical current townhouse review, which requires no notice early in the process. For project proposals requesting departures (Type II Decisions), all who commented would become parties of record and receive notice of MUP application and decision.

Consistent Web Site Posting

All design guidance packages would be posted on the design review web site shortly after submission.

Appeals

All townhouse projects that include design departures would be subject to appeal to the City's Hearing Examiner after land use decision issuance. However, if a project does not include departures there would be no appeal period.

Conclusion

The proposal would accomplish the following:

- Improve design quality and variety of townhouse projects by bringing townhouse projects through ADR.
- Improve the public's ability to comment and affect townhouse projects.
- Discourage micro-permitting by lowering threshold for design review to 3 units.
- Yield 40–60% shorter permit processing times than existing ADR.
- Yield 46% lower permitting fees than existing ADR.
- Reduce planner review hours from an average of 37 to a target of 16–24 hours. (Achieved through training and specialization of existing staff.)
- Build on existing process framework for relatively easy implementation.

Through evaluation and discussion with DPD staff, managers, stakeholders and members of the public, the recommended Administrative Design Review process was consistently supported. It would reduce the time and cost burden on both DPD and the applicant and significantly improve the public's ability to comment on and affect townhouse projects.

The recommended Administrative Design Review process would reduce the complexity of the existing ADR process to better fit smaller townhouse projects. It does not require significant additional processes to be developed and can therefore be executed in a straightforward and timely fashion.

Implementation of the proposed ADR process for townhouse development is a combination of the legislated elements of the proposal, as well as procedural practices internal to DPD. Key legislative elements including the threshold requirements for ADR, and the formal notice and land use decision parameters in the Land Use Code. Internal procedural elements of the proposal include items such as a new Client Assistant Memo (CAM) to provide information about the process for applicants, staffing assignments, and how projects are tracked in DPD's computer system.

Keys to Successful Townhouse Design

Some key elements for compatible townhouse design are described below. The following identifies design elements inherent to townhouses that are critical to successful, compatible townhouse design. Each of the design review topics is supportable by existing and proposed* citywide design review guidelines and should be considered during ADR.

Site Organization

Townhouse site plans feature intense competition for space at ground level, with ground related unit entrances, on-site parking, and required open space all competing for area. Site organization must make best use of unique circumstances such as slopes, natural features, presence of alleys and sun exposure. Successful townhouse site plans prioritize open spaces, unit entrances and pedestrian pathways. Vehicle access and storage must be carefully considered to allow efficient access, while making these features secondary elements of the site experience. Maximize alley access wherever available, and utilize topography to achieve below grade or tuck-under parking where possible. Shared parking and refuse storage areas are encouraged.

Supported by Citywide Design Guidelines

Existing: A1, A2, A8, D1

Proposed*: A1, A2, A3, C1, C3



Careful site organization can allow for pleasant interior spaces with favorable sun exposure.



Composition of varied color, material and texture can create interesting townhouse façades as viewed from the street.

* At the time of this report, the City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development has drafted updated Citywide and Multifamily and Commercial Design Guidelines, which are under review and subject to revision.

Relationships and Adjacencies

Townhouses are typically a transitional housing type between single family areas and more intensive neighborhood commercial or multi-family environments. New townhouse developments should complement the relationships to adjacent properties. For example, where adjacent to commercial uses or row house forms, new townhouse buildings may be encouraged to build fully to lot lines or minimize side setbacks; but where adjacent to single family zones, full setbacks and structures modulated to break building mass are more appropriate.

Supported by Citywide Design Guidelines

Existing: A2, A5, A6, B1, C1

Proposed: A2, A3, B1, B3, B4, C2, C3



Adjacencies can inform the appropriate massing at a site's edge. Some circumstances invite a strong row house edge with stoops.



Architectural style and composition can help townhouse development achieve compatibility in a neighborhood.



Vehicle storage and driveway areas can be flexible spaces that contribute to and blend with courtyards or patios.

Site Features

In townhouse developments the treatment of landscape, hardscape, fences and open space areas is essential to provide livability, interior buffers, and privacy. Landscaping should be abundant, and strategically placed to create soft transitions between separate structures and the varied pathways and driveways on site. These features are also important design elements to provide transition between the site and the public realm. Flexible courtyard spaces that can accommodate uses in addition to vehicle parking and driveways are encouraged. Where possible, attractive landscape or hardscape features should be introduced into vehicle parking areas. Open spaces for people, whether individual or shared, should be detailed with landscape and hardscape treatments to make them pleasant places.

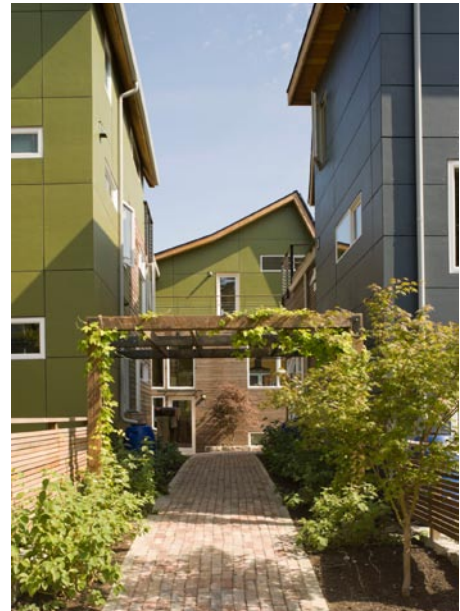
Supportable by Citywide Design Guidelines

Existing: A7, C3, D1, D5, D12, E1, E2, E3

Proposed: B1, B2, C2, C3



Abundant landscaping, even in a small setback, can create a pleasing transition between the sidewalk and private space.



Softening features such as detailed fences, vegetation and trellises can help provide livability, privacy and buffers within a townhouse site.

Architectural Design Concept

Careful design choices of architectural style, composition, colors and materials are essential – especially as experienced from the public realm. Building facades should display visually interesting architectural composition. Useful techniques may include modulation, attention to texture and color, and expression of human scale elements such as windows, doors and balconies.

Supportable by Citywide Design Guidelines

Existing: C1, C2, C3, D12

Proposed: A2, A4, C2, C4, C5